



## SWFI Bright Ideas: February 2019 – July 2019

This brief presents Bright Ideas that Strengthening Working Families Initiative (SWFI) grantees have been using to deliver program and system services between February 2019 and July 2019. The topics covered in the current brief include child care; employment activities; program design, practices, and approaches; training or education; and sustainability and systems integration. Earlier Bright Ideas briefs explore practices between June 2016 and January 2019.<sup>1</sup> In addition, Promising Practices briefs discuss grantees' approaches to child care and sustainability.<sup>2</sup> These briefs are designed to encourage peer grantees to share their innovative approaches with each other.

### How did the TA team identify Bright Ideas?

We used the following information from grantees to identify Bright Ideas:

- **Reviewing grantees' quarterly reports.** Every quarter, Mathematica staff review grantees' reports to document practices that grantees identify as promising.
- **Regular contact between grantees and Technical Assistance (TA) coaches, DSI, and FPOs.** The TA team regularly records and categorizes new approaches, changes to existing strategies, creative partnerships, and other elements of program design that are identified through contact with grantees.

To help grantees identify practices that are relevant to them, we sort Bright Ideas into five specific topics and then subtopics (see Table 1). We use the following topics:

- **Child care**, which relates to how SWFI grantees are meeting the child care needs of their participants, such as helping parents access child care subsidies.
- **Employment activities**, which relate to activities aimed at helping SWFI participants enter and maintain employment, such as partnering with employers.
- **Program design**, which relates to how SWFI grantees are designing their programs and service delivery to meet SWFI participants' needs, such as building regular communication across programs.

<sup>1</sup> SWFI Bright Ideas: June 2016 to March 2017. Available at:

[https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/10/03/12/27/July\\_Bright\\_Ideas\\_Brief](https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/10/03/12/27/July_Bright_Ideas_Brief); SWFI Bright Ideas: April 2017 to December 2017. Available at: <https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/02/15/16/24/Bright-Ideas-Tip-Sheet>; SWFI Bright Ideas: January 2018 to April 2018. Available at:

[https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/05/25/17/04/SWFI\\_April\\_Bright\\_Ideas\\_Brief](https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/05/25/17/04/SWFI_April_Bright_Ideas_Brief); SWFI Bright Ideas: May 2018 to June 2018. Available at: <https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/08/17/16/09/SWFI-Bright-Ideas-Brief-June-2018>; SWFI Bright Ideas: July 2018 to September 2018. Available at:

[https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/11/16/20/09/SWFI\\_Bright\\_Ideas\\_Brief\\_-\\_July-September-2018](https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2018/11/16/20/09/SWFI_Bright_Ideas_Brief_-_July-September-2018); SWFI Bright Ideas: October 2018 to January 2019. Available at: <https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/04/22/16/00/SWFI-Bright-Ideas-Brief-October-2018-January-2019>

<sup>2</sup> SWFI Child Care Promising Practices Brief. Available at: <https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/12/07/14/17/Child-Care-Promising-Practices-Brief>; SWFI Sustainability Promising Practices Brief. Available at: [https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/07/08/11/32/SWFI\\_Promising\\_Practices-Child\\_Care\\_and\\_Workforce\\_System\\_Integration\\_and\\_Program\\_Sustainability](https://h1bswfi.workforcegps.org/resources/2019/07/08/11/32/SWFI_Promising_Practices-Child_Care_and_Workforce_System_Integration_and_Program_Sustainability)



# Strengthening Working Families Initiative

- **Program practices and approach**, which relates to how SWFI grantees are implementing their program, such as how they are conducting outreach and recruitment and progressing towards systems integration.
- **Training or education**, which relates to the training or educational services grantees are offering SWFI participants, such as how they are developing career pathways to middle- and high-skilled employment.
- **Sustainability and integration of child care and workforce systems**, which relates to how grantees are preparing to sustain the grant and make lasting changes to child care and workforce systems.

---

## Do these ideas work?

---

Bright Ideas briefs provide grantees with a range of new strategies and elements of program design that are being used by other grantees; however, these features have not always been linked with positive outputs or outcomes (or indeed with any outputs or outcomes if the approaches are new).

More detailed Promising Practices briefs, released separately and less often, will explore practices that have been linked with positive outcomes. Please keep reporting your Bright Ideas, along with any outcomes, so that these can support peer sharing and other TA for you and your peer grantees! Please note that Bright Ideas briefs provide only a snapshot of the work grantees are doing, and not all grantees will be highlighted in any given brief.

Stay tuned for updates!



# Strengthening Working Families Initiative

**Table 1. Bright Ideas for the period February 2019–July 2019**

Topic(s)	Grantee	Bright Idea	Outputs/Outcomes
<b>Child care</b>			
Helping parents access affordable child care/early education	City of Long Beach, Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network	City of Long Beach, Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network (Pacific Gateway) has contracted with a child care provider who can offer child care onsite while short-term trainings are going on.	At a recent CNA training, 5 children received onsite child care, allowing their parents to participate in training.
Helping parents access affordable child care/early education	OAI, Inc.	As described in the <a href="#">July to September 2018 Bright Ideas brief</a> , OAI, Inc. has reduced child care costs for the program, reduced wait times for participants to receive child care assistance, and increased the number of families with access to a long-term child care assistance program through a partnership with the Illinois Action for Children.	Between April and June 2019, participants used \$30,235 in child care subsidies through Illinois Action for Children.
<b>Employment activities</b>			
Employer partnerships	Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)	Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD) provides multiple opportunities for SWFI participants to engage and network with potential employers in the banking sector through existing employer relationships. Banks present to the participants about their banks and conduct mock interviews with participants. Participants also attend bank branch openings to network with potential employers.	Two participants each had two job offers by the time they completed training. This helped the participants negotiate for higher pay.
Employer partnerships	Alachua Bradford Regional Workforce Board d/b/a CareerSource North Central Florida (CareerSource NCFL)	Alachua Bradford Regional Workforce Board d/b/a CareerSource North Central Florida (CareerSource NCFL) held a reverse job fair. For the reverse job fair, program graduates pitched themselves at their own tables and employers walked around to meet candidates (rather than employers having tables and marketing to job seekers).	All fifteen of the program graduates who participated received multiple job offers. A local news station did <a href="#">a story</a> on the reverse job fair.



# Strengthening Working Families Initiative

Topic(s)	Grantee	Bright Idea	Outputs/Outcomes
Employer partnerships	Community College of Aurora (CCA)	Community College of Aurora (CCA)'s Career Coach organized a tour of CSL Plasma, a local phlebotomy employer, through connections with the employer. Students were exposed to the work environment, interacted with professionals in the field, and posed questions about the field.	Eighteen students toured CSL Plasma. Due to the strengthened relationships between CCA and CSL Plasma, one student was later hired as a Donor Support Technician while the student completes their Patient Care Technician certificate.
Employer partnerships	Moore Community House	Moore Community House has partnered with Ingalls Shipbuilding to create a boot camp for participants who have completed the general industry course. The boot camp provides specific industry information and skills needed for shipbuilding. The employer is then hiring participants who complete this boot camp as pre-apprentices with a \$20/hour wage. Two cohorts of participants have gone through the boot camp, with a total of 40 participants.	The boot camp participants have a 95 percent retention rate in the boot camp compared to 50 percent of non-SWFI participants. Once finished, participants have been hired at \$20/hour.
Employer partnerships/ using LMI data	City of Phoenix	City of Phoenix created the Employer's Assessment Tool which will be shared with employers on an ongoing basis for assessing their recruiting/training needs. The tool was initially sent electronically to more than 30 employers. City of Phoenix used information gathered from the Employer Assessment Tool in conjunction with local Labor Market Information (LMI) to identify greatest needs in the area, and continued to engage employers who responded to the Employer Assessment Tool about the services SWFI could provide them in these high need areas. The SWFI team visited some employers who reported that they prefer to train their current employees; they advertised the additional supportive services SWFI can provide their employees such as paying licensing/re-examination fees, childcare services, and providing tools and clothes.	Twenty local employers engaged with SWFI through the Employer Assessment Tool. City of Phoenix discovered an immediate need for CNAs, Medical Assistants, phlebotomists, ready-to hire caregivers, and IT call center and data center technicians. They are focusing their training in these areas, with a particular focus on the CNA and IT-related trainings because they can be completed within the grant timeline.
Targeted industries/occupations	Memphis Bioworks Foundation	Memphis Bioworks Foundation is partnering with the Memphis Medical District Collaborative, which is made up of several local hospitals and medical providers in specific Memphis area zip codes. Human Resources staff participate in this collaborative to align their hiring systems to give preference to participants living in the targeted zip codes. Memphis Bioworks is working with training providers to identify participants who are located in the targeted zip codes for when they are ready to seek employment.	In process.



# Strengthening Working Families Initiative

Topic(s)	Grantee	Bright Idea	Outputs/Outcomes
Employer partnerships	Total Action Against Poverty in the Roanoke Valley, Inc. (now Total Action for Progress; TAP)	Total Action Against Poverty in the Roanoke Valley, Inc. (now Total Action for Progress; TAP)'s Business Solutions team in Roanoke invites groups of local employers to their regular team meetings. During these meetings, employers introduce their company and explain their needs, and the Business Solutions team offers strategic ways they can partner with SWFI to train their employees and recruit new ones.	To date, TAP has identified two local employers to partner with from these employer meetings: Syncom, an expanding local manufacturing business with OJT capabilities; and Integrity Windows, who wants to train and provide accommodations for employees with disabilities.
<b>Program practices and approach</b>			
Co-enrollment	City of Long Beach, Pacific Gateway Workforce Innovation Network	Pacific Gateway is co-enrolling individuals with WIOA. Because the WIOA eligibility requirements are more challenging, they try to enroll participants into WIOA and then, if they have children and are interested in eligible industries, they are automatically enrolled in SWFI. This allows Pacific Gateway to provide more services to participants because they can provide some supportive services through WIOA.	As of March 2019, about \$99,000 in leveraged WIOA funds had been utilized.
Outreach and recruitment	Alachua Bradford Regional Workforce Board d/b/a CareerSource North Central Florida (CareerSource NCFL)	CareerSource NCFL successfully recruited for a community-focused "Own your Future" class. They conducted substantial community outreach to CBOs and faith-based organizations to get them on-board to help recruit participants. They also called potential participants who are unemployed and have less than an Associate's degree who they identified from the Employ Florida database (8,200 potential participants). They also conducted community-based recruitment. For example, they set up a stall at a local farm and home store and signed up 14 potential participants just at the store.	The outreach results in one of the largest "Own your Future" classes yet. Seventy-one participants attended the introductory session and 38 enrolled in the class.
Other program practices and approach	Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)	ABCD staff conduct transition planning with participants to reduce their experience of "cliff effects", when increases in income mean participants experience reductions in public benefits greater than the increase in their income. This planning helps participants anticipate changes in their income and potential changes to their benefits, specifically housing benefits. ABCD staff also help participants track their state subsidies for child care, access additional child care support, and transition their child care arrangements once GATE funding concludes.	In process.



# Strengthening Working Families Initiative

Topic(s)	Grantee	Bright Idea	Outputs/Outcomes
Online platforms and tools	The WorkPlace	The WorkPlace launched a website for their SWFI program ( <a href="https://healthcareeracademy.org/">https://healthcareeracademy.org/</a> ) that provides an overview of their program, events, training providers, partners/vendors, and their database of 140 local childcare providers. This web resource has enabled The WorkPlace to share information with other programs at The WorkPlace.	The website has improved The WorkPlace's web presence and program participants' access to childcare provider resources. Sharing their database of local childcare providers with other programs at The WorkPlace has expanded the SWFI program impact beyond SWFI because other programs can provide this information to their participants.
Other program practices and approach	The WorkPlace	The WorkPlace has designed a pilot project focused on transporting program participants (via the Health CareRx Academy sponsored van) who complete training to partnering employers in a cohort of 6-7 participants for on-site interviews. These individuals will be selected and matched with relevant employers based on their training selection.	In process.
<b>Training or education</b>			
Apprenticeships	City of Phoenix	As described in the <a href="#">October 2018 to January 2019 Bright Ideas brief</a> , City of Phoenix is working with the apprenticeship program of Arizona at the Department of Economic Security, which has recently created apprenticeships for CNAs and Inside Claims Representatives. The SWFI team has worked with the employers and the Department of Economic Security apprenticeship program coordinator to screen current participants for SWFI eligibility to offer supportive services. Because these training programs are new, City of Phoenix expects to begin to receive referrals now that they have established this relationship. The SWFI Business Solutions Specialist is also working with Department of Economic Security to create a database of employers to court for an IT apprenticeship.	In process.
Credentialing	OIC of Broward dba OIC of South Florida	OIC of Broward dba OIC of South Florida is offering self-paced Microsoft trainings to help participants without an IT background receive credentials quickly. Participants can attend one day or evening to work through the trainings on-site.	In process.



# Strengthening Working Families Initiative

Topic(s)	Grantee	Bright Idea	Outputs/Outcomes
Credentialing	The WorkPlace	The WorkPlace has undertaken several unique strategies to address their low credentialing rate. These strategies include partnering participants with student mentors from previous cohorts, working with training providers to provide exams onsite at their training facilities, and providing study materials and transportation for provider-supplied study groups. They are also developing a study skills class with a local vendor to support participants throughout training and help with their credentialing rate.	In process.
Training or education: Short-term intensive training	Community College of Aurora (CCA)	CCA has added short-term trainings to serve more students and to focus on retention and completion. These trainings include bootcamps, an accelerated IT certificate, a mental health certificate and an add-on Data Analytics certificate for immigrant students with bachelor's degrees from their home country. These trainings have increased enrollment and will contribute to completion. The accelerated IT technology training condenses a yearlong program into a semester and provides wraparound services, such as tutors in the classes to support students. More short-term trainings will be implemented between August and October 2019.	Five students enrolled in the first bootcamp and one is scheduled to complete the training on time. An additional three students are expected to complete after the fall semester.
Upskilling incumbent worker training	Total Action Against Poverty in the Roanoke Valley, Inc. (now Total Action for Progress; TAP)	TAP has learned that many employers are in high need of CNAs, especially the rehabilitation and assisted living healthcare employers. They have started to connect with these employers to see if there are incumbent worker training opportunities to upskill employees who are currently in dining or environmental services into a CNA position with the same employer.	In process.
Working with institutions of higher education; Employer partnerships	Vermont Technical College	Vermont Technical College worked with employers and its partner Institutions of Higher Education to identify new training options that would meet the needs of SWFI participants and employers. The grantee has begun offering classes in SolidWorks, CNC machining, and welding. These will be shorter-term training programs that will better align with participant needs to gain a credential quickly and begin work.	In process.
<b>Sustainability and systems integration</b>			
Sustainability and systems integration	Moore Community House	Moore Community House is partnering with workforce and child care entities to map how state funds can be used to provide child care as a work support.	This is in process.